

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method of identifying a plurality of alternate travel itineraries, the method comprising the steps of:

simultaneously providing a plurality of flexible date search options to a user with a web server, one of the plurality of flexible date search options comprising performing a search based on a user entered trip date interval and a user entered trip length, the user entered trip date interval comprising a user entered departure date and a user entered return date, wherein the user entered trip length is less than a period of time between the user entered departure date and the user entered return date;

receiving a search option selection from the user via a network;

requesting travel date information from the user based on the search option selection;

receiving the travel date information from the user via the network;

determining all pairs of departure dates and return dates that satisfy the travel date information with an application server;

identifying fares for itineraries corresponding to each of the departure date and return date pairs with a search engine; and

displaying the fares on a display.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the itineraries are air travel itineraries.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the travel date information comprises a date interval during which a weekend trip is desired.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein a weekend trip is defined as a Thursday, Friday or Saturday departure and a Sunday, Monday or Tuesday return.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 4 wherein the step of determining all pairs of departure dates and return dates comprises identifying all weekends that occur during the date interval, and pairing each possible departure date associated with each possible return date for the corresponding weekend for each weekend that occurs within the date interval.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5 wherein the date interval comprises a calendar month.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the travel date information comprises a desired departure date, a desired return date, and at least one of a specified number of days preceding said desired departure date, a specified number of days following said departure date, a specified number of days preceding said desired return date, and a specified number of days following said desired return date.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7 wherein the step of determining all pairs of departure dates and return dates comprises:

identifying all possible departure dates based on the desired departure date and the specified number of acceptable days preceding the desired departure date and the number of acceptable travel days following said desired departure date;

identifying all possible return dates based on the desired return date and the specified number of acceptable travel days preceding the desired return date and the number of acceptable travel days following the desired return date; and

pairing each possible departure date with each possible return date.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the travel date information comprises said user entered trip date interval and said user entered trip length.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9 wherein said user entered trip length is expressed as a numerical value or a numerical range setting forth the desired length of the trip in days.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9, wherein the step of identifying all pairs of departure dates and return dates comprises:

determining all possible departure dates and all possible return dates within the trip date interval that encompasses a trip of the received trip length; and
pairing each possible departure date with each possible return date.

13. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method of searching for travel itineraries comprising the steps of:

simultaneously providing a plurality of flexible date search options to a user with a web server, one of the plurality of flexible date search options comprising performing a search based on a user entered trip date interval and a user entered trip length, the user entered trip date interval comprising a user entered departure date and a user entered return date, wherein the user entered trip length is less than a period of time between the user entered departure date and the user entered return date;

receiving a search option selection from the user via a network;

requesting travel date information from the user based on the search option selection;

receiving the travel date information from the user via the network;

identifying one or more departure dates and one or more return dates based on the travel date information with an application server, where at least one of said one or more departure dates and said one or more return dates comprises more than one date;

identifying a plurality of date pairs with the application server, each date pair comprising one of said one or more departure dates and one of said one or more return dates;

searching for fares for itineraries corresponding to each date pair with a search engine; and

displaying said fares on a display.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 13 wherein the step of identifying one or more departure dates and one or more return dates comprises identifying every weekend within a defined date range, and identifying at least one departure date and at least one return date for each weekend.

15. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14 wherein identifying at least one departure date and at least one return date for each weekend comprises:

identifying at least one departure date corresponding to at least one of Thursday, Friday and Saturday for each weekend within said defined date range; and

identifying at least one return date corresponding to at least one of Sunday, Monday and Tuesday for each weekend within said defined date range.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14 wherein said defined date range is a calendar month.

17. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein the step of identifying one or more departure dates and one or more return dates includes receiving a specified departure date and a range of days preceding and/or following said specified departure date.

18. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein the step of identifying one or more departure dates and one or more return dates includes receiving a specified return date and a range of days preceding and/or following said specified return date.

19. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 13 wherein the step of identifying one or more departure dates and one or more return dates includes receiving a date range for a trip and receiving a specified trip length, wherein the one or more departure dates are identified as every departure date within said date range which can accommodate a trip of the specified trip length within said date range.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 13 wherein the step of identifying one or more departure dates and one or more return dates includes receiving a date range and receiving a specified trip length, wherein the one or more return dates are identified as every return date within said date range which can accommodate a trip of the specified trip length within said date range.

21. (Withdrawn) A method of displaying fares for a plurality of travel itineraries having alternative travel dates, the method comprising the steps of:

creating a matrix of rows and columns;

defining date pairs at the intersections of the rows and columns;

listing fares at the intersections of the rows and columns, the fares corresponding to itineraries that include departure and return dates corresponding to the date pair defined by the row and column in which the fare is listed.

22. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 21 wherein said matrix is adapted to display itineraries for weekend trips within a specified time period.

23. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 22 wherein departure dates are listed along a first axis of said matrix, return days are listed along a second axis, and return dates are listed within said columns and grouped by weekend such that each departure date listed along the first axis is paired with a return date corresponding to each day listed along the second axis said departure date and return date pairs spanning a single weekend.

24. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 21 wherein the matrix is adapted to display itineraries based around specified departure and return dates and a specified number of days around said specified departure and return dates.

25. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 24 wherein departure dates are listed along a first axis of the matrix, and return dates are listed along a second axis of the matrix.

26. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 21 wherein the matrix is adapted to display itineraries of a specified length within a specified date range.

27. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 26 wherein a plurality of departure dates are listed along a first axis and a plurality of different trip lengths are displayed along a second axis, return dates are listed at the intersections of the matrix rows and columns such that each return date corresponds to a trip of length equal to the trip length and a departure date equal to the departure date defined by the position of the return date with the matrix.

28. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 21 further comprising the step of highlighting a fare and each date of a date pair associated with said fare when a user points to said fare.

29. (Previously Presented) A system for searching for and displaying travel itineraries and fares for flexible travel schedules, comprising:

means for receiving a flexible date search option selection from a user, the means comprising simultaneously providing a plurality of flexible date search options to the user, one of the plurality of flexible date search options comprising performing a search based on a user entered trip date interval and a user entered trip length, the user entered trip date interval comprising a user entered departure date and a user entered return date, wherein the user entered trip length is less than a period of time between the user entered departure date and the user entered return date;

means for receiving travel date information from the user, the means comprising requesting travel date information from the user based on the flexible date search option selection;

means for determining all pairs of departure dates and return dates that satisfy the travel date information; and

search means for identifying itineraries corresponding to said date pairs.

30. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method of identifying a plurality of alternate travel itineraries, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving travel date information from the user via a network, the travel date information comprising a trip date range, the trip date range comprising a user specified earliest departure date and a user specified latest return date, and a trip length, wherein the trip length is less than the trip date range;

determining all pairs of departure dates and return dates that satisfy the travel date information with an application server;

identifying fares for itineraries corresponding to each of the departure date and return date pairs with a search engine; and

displaying the fares on a display.

31. (Cancelled)

32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 30 wherein said trip length is expressed as a numerical value or a numerical range setting forth the desired length of the trip in days.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the step of identifying all pairs of departure dates and return dates comprises:

determining all possible departure dates and all possible return dates within the trip date range that encompass a trip of the received trip length; and
pairing each possible departure date with each possible return date.

34. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11 wherein, when said user entered trip length is expressed as a numerical range, said numerical range comprises a minimum period of time and a maximum period of time, and wherein the minimum period of time of the numerical range is less than said period of time between the user entered departure date and the user entered return date.

35. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 13 wherein said travel date information comprises said user entered trip date interval and said user entered trip length.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35 wherein said user entered trip length is expressed as a numerical value or a numerical range setting forth the desired length of the trip in days.

37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36 wherein, when said user entered trip length is expressed as a numerical range, said numerical range comprises a minimum period of time and a maximum period of time, and wherein the minimum period of time of the numerical range is less than said period of time between the user entered departure date and the user entered return date.

38. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 29 wherein said travel date information comprises said user entered trip date interval and said user entered trip length.

39. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 38 wherein said user entered trip length is expressed as a numerical value or a numerical range setting forth the desired length of the trip in days.

40. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 39 wherein, when said user entered trip length is expressed as a numerical range, said numerical range comprises a minimum period of time and a maximum period of time, and wherein the minimum period of time of the numerical range is less than said period of time between the user entered departure date and the user entered return date.

41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32 wherein, when said trip length is expressed as a numerical range, said numerical range comprises a minimum period of time and a maximum period of time, and wherein the minimum period of time of the numerical range is less than said trip date range.